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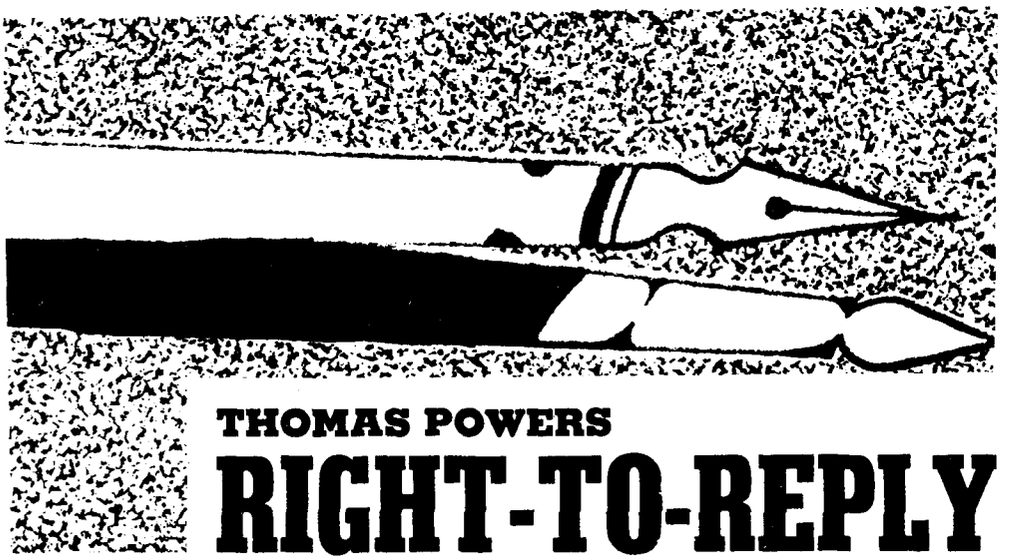
Fiftieth Anniversary Year



THOMAS POWERS

RIGHT-TO-REPLY LAWS

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A CITY OF TWO FACES
SISYPHUS

PLANETARY HUMANITIES
MICHAEL NOVAK

EXORCISING A VICE PRESIDENT
GEORGE BEHAN

PAIR O' DOXIES
COLIN L. WESTERBECK, JR.

MORAL CONSISTENCY & ABORTION
AN EXCHANGE OF VIEWS

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EDEN'S RELIGIONS
Robert T. Handy
WHITE'S EYE
Robert Phillips
PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Fred M. Hechinger

CORRESPONDENCE:
HEALING
William L. Day
NO-CONFIDENCE
Daniel A. Degnan
GERMANY
Alfons Beil

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NEWS & VIEWS

Trading on Religion

In Italy authorities are doing battle again with the merchandizers of "Jesus Jeans." Last summer, the Milan clothing company and its advertising department shocked sensibilities with a promotion showing a female torso in unzippered blue jeans and bearing the slogan, "Thou Shalt Have No Other Jeans But Me." This spring the company is showing the rear view of a female model in denim shorts, over which is imprinted, "He who loves me, follows me."

An Italian court decision appears to leave objectors with no recourse for their outrage other than a boycott. It ruled last fall that the ad posters were not intended to be "offensive to religion or public decency," trade name and scriptural allusions notwithstanding.

In New York, meanwhile, ads for an X-rated movie called *Bible!* were causing upset. The first ads to run in the press showed a voluptuous "Kate Smith" cradling a baby, with halos and radiance above their heads, and what looked like a "sacred heart" on the bosom of her dress. The *Times*' advertising acceptability department hurriedly deleted halos and radiance as offensive to certain religious groups. Overlooked was the heart—and a Star of David hanging around the woman's neck. The *Times* again got in touch with the ad agency handling the film: the Star of David would have to go if the ad ran again.

The Daily News, heeding the *Times*' troubles, deleted the illustration from its ad for the film.

The journalism review [*More*] handled the controversy lightheartedly, sighing that "it was a week to test the faith of any believer." Its clincher: "Cardinal Cooke was trapped for over an hour in an elevator."

Still Losing Big

Church-sponsored stockholder resolutions are not faring well at spring corporation meetings.

Two United Church of Christ resolutions on Gulf Oil's operations in Portuguese-ruled Angola and on "energy crisis" issues were overwhelmingly defeated by Gulf's stockholders. The Angola challenge received 2.3 million votes, and the energy challenge, 3.2 million. . . . That's out of 194,651,710 outstanding shares.

At Bethlehem Steel's meeting, a resolution asking termination of a contract with Portugal for mineral-exploration rights in Mozambique picked up only 50 votes more than the 1,400 held by the filer: the Women's Division of the United Methodist Board of Global Ministries.

Faring somewhat better was a resolution filed by the Loretto Motherhouse of Nerinx, Ky., dealing with Bethlehem's strip-mining operations and the effects of environmental destruction on the people of Appalachia. A total of 1,620,-702 shares was voted in favor of the Sisters' resolution, to 29,807,133 opposed.

The unexpected 5.16 percentage qualifies the order to file the same challenge a second time—a year hence. The showing, heartening as it may have been, still leaves the Sisters far short, however, of realistic possibility of success then.

The experience this spring, in sum, may bring a reopening of the question whether religious groups and others of social responsibility can indefinitely justify stock-holding in corporations of unenlightened business practices on grounds that their investment position enables them to work for a change in corporate practices. The chances of sensitizing a giant corporation and its millions of stockholders through an annual resolution or two are so slim that even token holdings seem to become doubtful.

Bye, Bearings

Bearings is gone.

The agency, founded in 1966 to ease the transition of clergy and women religious to secular life, has been voted out of existence by its board of directors.

Over an eight-year period, Bearings assisted 5,500 persons, 70 percent of them Catholic.

Malcolm Pennington, chairman of the board, cited three reasons for the termination:

- The exodus of persons from the ministry has tapered off. (Individuals contacting Bearings have dropped from a peak of 400 per month to less than 30.)
- Decisions to move from church to secular employment is less emotional today than when Bearings was set up—and more acceptable to the public.
- Denominations and dioceses are providing more support and counseling to men and women who review their career options.

"Bearings has served a considerable segment of humanity in a time of its want," Pennington declared. It "has won the gratitude of thousands, and can become a footnote in the history of the church."

Helping fill the vacuum created by Bearings' closing will be Opportunities for Professional Transition, Inc., a New York organization formed in 1970, and career development centers and spin-off groups in New York, Pittsburgh and other cities.

'The Dirty Dozen'

Environmental Action, a national conservation organization, has fingered the "Dirty Dozen" of the House and called for their defeat in the 1974 elections on the basis of their poor record on environmental issues.

The list includes Sam Steiger [R-Ariz.], second ranking Republican on the Interior Committee; Frank Stubblefield [D-Ky.], vice-chairman of the Agriculture Committee, and Samuel Devine [R-Ohio], ranking Republican on the Interstate Commerce Committee. Additional "Dirty Dozen" candidates are Glenn Davis [R-Wis.], William Hudnut [R-Ind.], John Hunt [R-NJ], Earl Landgrebe [R-Ind.], Roger Mathias [R-Cal.], Dale Milford [D-Tex.], William Scherle [R-Iowa], Burt Talcott [R-Cal.] and Roger Zion [R-Ind.].

Environmental Action named "Dirty Dozen" legislators in 1970 and 1972. Coincidentally or not, 50 percent of these were defeated, including former Interior Committee Chairman Wayne Aspinall of Colorado.

Odds and Ends

— The Archdiocese of Baltimore will ordain two black seminarians this month. They will be the first black parish priests ordained in the archdiocese, the oldest in the U.S., in its 185-year history! During the segregationist years, black students of the diocesan seminary went elsewhere for ordination.

— Don't knock Ann Landers' pulling power. A plug in her advice column for Eugene Kennedy's *Living with Everyday Problems* brought 5,000 book orders in three days to the publisher, Thomas More Press in Chicago.

—The Miami hospital visited by Nixon last February and cited by him as a model for his privately financed national health insurance plan has gone into receivership. A U. S. bankruptcy judge named a receiver for Cedars of Lebanon Hospital after a hearing that revealed debts totaling more than $12 million, including $910,000 owed IRS for taxes withheld from employees.

— *Adding Coals to the Fire Department:* Bishop William Philbin of Down and Connor has refused the sacrament of Confirmation to Catholic children attending state-operated schools in Belfast.

JOHN DEEDY

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CORRESPONDENCE

Christian Healing

Unadilla, N. Y.

To the Editors: I was horrified (to put it mildly) to see healing equated with "spiritualism, and all sorts of 'superstitious beliefs' from palm reading and astrology to devil-worship" in Irving Louis Horowitz's article "The Europeanization of American Politics" [Apr. 5].

Healing was, both in the Old and New Testaments, one of the greatest evidences of God's power and good will being manifested among men. And it still is today. If Mr. Horowitz would like to see for himself, I direct him to the next healing service of Kathryn Kuhlman in Pittsburgh so that he may see for himself not only the radical difference between (Christian) healing and "superstitious beliefs" but the results of such healing as well.

(REV.) WILLIAM L. DAY

No No-Confidence

Syracuse, N.Y.

To the Editors: Congressman Reuss' no-confidence amendment [Apr. 12], in which sixty percent of both houses of Congress can force a new election for a President in office, putting the President on leave in the meantime while the Vice President governs, is a bald bid for Congressional control of the government. It is good evidence of the extremes to which Watergate can lead us in reaction.

The proposal is totally unlike the parliamentary system. There the restraint on a no-confidence vote (besides the party discipline notoriously lacking in our system) is that it brings on new elections for everybody, putting the government and the parties before the country. In Reuss' proposal, Congress would bring down the President, not itself, and would do so at the discretion of 60 percent of its fractious members.

Our Constitution, unlike the Parlia-

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EXPLETIVES REMOVED

Perhaps the most astonishing aspect of President Richard M. Nixon's decision to pull another of his surprise plays and release his own heavily expurgated version of the White House tapes is that somehow he thought that the disclosure would help him. The White House inner circle has been obsessed with John Dean. In the wake of the Mitchell-Stans acquittal—a case only peripherally related to Watergate—the Nixon team must have guessed that this was the time to land some punches on the credibility of the President's chief accuser, and that the edited transcript—which, they hoped, few citizens would take time to read—introduced by a Nixon TV pitch, would fix Dean the Wheeler-Dealer and Nixon the Victimized Chief in the public mind. Thus, just as the TV camera in the 1952 Checkers speech shifted solemnly to the moist-eyed Pat, last week it turned to the two-foot stack of transcripts emblazoned with the Presidential seal—would-be symbol of openness and trust.

It worked. For a day. He split the House Judiciary Committee along party lines. Before they had time to read the papers. Then—no good. The Gallup Poll reports that only 17 percent of 700 adults questioned have a more favorable impression of the President. The transcripts certainly do not portray John Dean as a saint. But, unlike Nixon, he never claimed innocence. He has simply claimed that his testimony is true; and Senators Ervin, Baker and Weicker have reiterated their confiedence in what he has said.

The more the public finds out about Richard Nixon the more it realizes he is unworthy of his office. To read what the supposed custodians of the public trust say to one another in time of crisis has made both Nixon defenders and critics sick at heart. They now know more about Nixon than than anyone really wants to know. They weep that the chair once occupied by Washington, Jefferson, Lincoln, Wilson and Roosevelt should now belong to so small a man. In his futile attempt to prove that he is not a crook he has proven that he is something worse—the totally amoral person. Thus 1300 pages of cynicism, pettiness, paranoia, indecision, vindictiveness, opportunism and desperation.

So we have the man who has often reminded us that he is a lawyer

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approving hush money, preparing to use the Justice Department against his political foes, suggesting that his staff forget what they know when questioned by the grand jury. And strings of "expletives" removed from the private talk of the man who, in the 1960 Kennedy TV debates, piously lectured us on how Harry Truman shouldn't use bad words. And Nixon promising Haldeman and Ehrlichman future jobs with his foundation (" . . . a hell of a big thing.")—editing. Perhaps the greatest mystery is how any man could have so little objective judgment on the morality of his own behavior to secretly record all his conversations with men he called his friends, claim the records were for historians, refuse to release them because they were "confidential," then read, censor and publish them without realizing what they really said about himself. The only answer to that mystery is that the man is Nixon.

Exorcising a Vice President

On April 4, Georgetown University President Robert J. Henle, S.J., issued a verbal ultimatum to Executive Vice President in charge of Educational Affairs, Edmund G. Ryan, S.J., stating that if he did not resign within seven days, he would be dismissed. Fr. Ryan refused to resign, Fr. Henle issued a letter of dismissal, and the Georgetown campus erupted in chaos.

What is significant about Fr. Ryan's firing is that Fr. Henle failed to write any reasons for his decision in his April 11 dismissal letter; and furthermore, he has yet to inform the public *and Fr. Ryan* of any specific charges that warranted the firing with only one week left in the academic year. Fr. Henle used the term "irreconcilable differences," but he has never explained or clarified this ambiguous justification. The Georgetown student body and faculty are demanding to know more.

Fr. Ryan came to Georgetown in July 1972 as the top Vice President of a new University governing structure. He spent almost a year "learning about Georgetown" before shifting into high gear in 1973, and became rather well known on campus for his efficiency and interest in every phase of the University. Consequently, he has been a tremendous boost to the Georgetown public relations department, in that instead of their having to think up new ideas about the University, Fr. Ryan gave the public relations people news almost as fast as they could publish it.

Fr. Ryan was among the 20 Georgetown Jesuits who had walk-on parts in the film, *The Exorcist;* they reportedly got extra pay for appearing in costume (black suits and Roman collars). He was the answer to Georgetown's public relations dreams regarding the film. Before Fr. Ryan came to Georgetown in July 1972, Fr. Henle had already agreed to have the film shot on campus. When *The Exorcist* opened in December 1973 many Catholics wondered out loud why Georgetown had cooperated with the film. Fr. Ryan was made available to the media. He appeared on the "Tomorrow Show," "Mike Douglas Show," "Cross-fire," the "Devil's Advocate" and other national and local television shows. His ability to toss out one-liners and interact with an audience brought him more and more invitations. He also spoke on 35 radio shows. But, contrary to some reports, Ryan was not an advisor to the film and the film was not an immediate cause of his dismissal.

Fr. Ryan started a Student Exchange Program (STEP) which received international attention by proposing to bring 500 German students to American colleges. He also became active on D.C. Home Rule legislation, and was involved in starting new middle-class student aid programs on Capitol Hill. Around campus he earned the nickname of "Fast Eddie" because of his quick action, and he was one of the few Georgetown administrators who were accessible to almost everyone on campus. His door was always open, and he meticulously followed up an any problem or question brought to his attention. One might now ask, Why was he fired? What was the problem?

The irreconcilable differences, which Fr. Henle will not comment on, can be deduced by merely examining each man's situation. Fr. Henle, approaching 65, has been Georgetown's president since June 1969. His "Mandate 81" fund-raising program is nearing the end of its first phase, which has been relatively successful, but the contributions are slowing during the present period of inflation and recession. During the early part of this academic year, Fr. Henle's fifth year in office, some people began to look for a new face. Fr. Ryan, at 45, brought with him new energy, new ideas, and a new way of implementing ideas—quick action. These are two strong-willed men involved in a struggle that is not a power conflict; it is personality conflict which, ideally, should not enter into the governing of any corporation, including a university.

Admittedly, Fr. Henle brought Fr. Ryan to Georgetown from St. Peter's College in New Jersey in 1972, and Fr. Ryan was given a contract stating that he was the "1st Vice President" and would "automatically assume the duties of the President" during any presidential absence or disability. This contract was drawn up to conform to explicit resolutions which the Georgetown Board of Directors passed on May 22, 1972. At the most recent Board meeting, on March 15th, Fr. Henle announced a short leave which he is planning to take from June to late August this summer. This absence is authorized in compliance with a policy whereby the president is obligated to take a leave of absence at least every five years, but no more than every three years.

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Fr. Henle announced that during his absence he did not want to leave the University in the hands of Fr. Ryan because, he explained, the two had been having some serious differences. Fr. Henle was questioned at length about his proposal to run the University by "cabinet meeting," in which the five top University administrators (Ryan included) would sit on this cabinet. He reportedly did not specifically inform the Board of the provisions in Fr. Ryan's contract. Nevertheless, Fr. Henle convinced the Board of Directors to approve his proposal, and he also reportedly made charges "by innuendo" concerning Fr. Ryan to substantiate his reason for the uncommon proposal.

Rumors of what had happened at the March 15 meeting filtered back to Fr. Ryan, and he urged Fr. Henle to write down any charges against him so that he could have a chance to clear his name and have a chance to have his performance evaluated. Fr. Henle did not comply, and the stage was set for the Holy Thursday Massacre (Fr. Ryan was dismissed on Holy Thursday). Fr. Ryan reportedly sought formal charges from Fr. Henle on numerous occasions, but Fr. Henle only made some petty verbal charges, to which, it is said, Fr. Ryan offered full written refutation.

Also at the March 15 Board of Directors meeting, the Board approved a "Code Governing Academic Freedom and Conduct of the Faculty and Academic Administrators of the University." This document states that one of the categories to which the Code applies is "all academic administrators." Fr. Henle said it would be illogical for one to assume that the Code could be applied to Fr. Ryan, and that he interprets the category "all academic administrators" to mean academic Deans. Georgetown Law School Professor Sherman Cohn, principal author of the Code, said the explicit intention in drawing up this category was that it should apply to persons such as Fr. Ryan, among others. Vice Presidents are obviously included, according to Mr. Cohn.

The Code states that in any dispute, a person should "file a written statement to the effect that disciplinary action is contemplated, *and specifying charges.*" Therefore a case can be made against Fr. Henle, since he never filed a written statement to this effect, and Fr. Ryan can use the Code's grievance procedure to appeal his dismissal. The Code calls for outside private arbitration in the event that all other methods of settlement are exhausted.

Fr. Ryan is in a dilemma. He could have resigned; others at Georgetown have submitted their resignations because of reported disagreements with the president. Fr. Ryan was the first Jesuit administrator at Georgetown to be given a valid civil contract, and it confirms his appointment at Georgetown from July 1, 1972 through June 30, 1975. This new situation came as a result of a Jesuit decision to legally separate the Jesuit community at Georgetown from the University. Thus, Fr. Ryan was not sent to Georgetown by a provincial, but was given permission by two provincials to come. He accepted the appointment and signed a contract. After he was fired by Fr. Henle, Fr. Ryan was advised by his Jesuit superiors to seek legal counsel. Thus, religious obedience permitted Fr. Ryan to come to Georgetown, and paradoxically urged him to remain there and fight for the validity of his contract.

Students have used protests, threats of a strike, and even the familiar sit-in tactics to peacefully show their discontent with Fr. Henle's actions. The Executive Committee of the Board of Directors met on April 19th and were greeted at the front steps of the administration building by a large group of students, reminding the Board members that a hasty decision would be sure to cause tremendous repercussions. The conspicuous statue of Georgetown's founder, John Carroll, keeping watch over Georgetown's Healy Circle, was adorned with a placard proclaiming "Henle Go Home," and students carrying signs imprinted "WHY" gathered near the administration building, reminiscent of the protest spirit of the late 1960s. The Executive Committee voted to review Fr. Henle's decision at the full Board meeting on May 20th.

The issue is that Georgetown's reputation is at stake. Many people will fail to understand why two intelligent Jesuits cannot sit down and resolve any differences between them, since it is Christian teaching that no differences are "irreconcilable." The question that the Board of Directors will have to face is a question of the president's authority. One Board member who attended the March 15th meeting said that many times the Board acts as a "rubber stamp for the president." If that is the case, the Board is helpless. Another criticism of the Board is that, since it is a fully external Board except for the president, it does not receive enough good input about the University. Fr. Henle and University Secretary Daniel J. Altobello are the only two persons who supply input to the Board on a regular basis. It is inconceivable that the Board could have a sufficient understanding of the University's problems, when the only two persons whom the Board regularly questions about these problems are Fr. Henle, who has very limited contact with most of the faculty and the student body, and Secretary Altobello, a 1963 Georgetown graduate, whose salary has increased by over 200% in the four years in which Fr. Henle has controlled the University budget.

The question which one can rather bluntly ask is "Can a president overlook the apparent overwhelming merits of a vice president to dismiss him for personal reasons?" The Board, supposedly looking out for the overall best interests of the University, will have to ponder this question on May 20th. Certainly their decision will not go unnoticed.

GEORGE BEHAN

(*George Behan is on the staff of the Georgetown* Hoya.)

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PLANETARY HUMANITIES

MICHAEL NOVAK

We hear a great deal today about the prospect of mass starvation, the costs of energy and fertilizer, the fuse of population growth. Sophisticated persons know enough to reject the "technological fix" as a solution to the problems of humankind; but few actually go beyond technology.

Yet the deepest crisis on this planet lies in the humanities. We do not have an international humanities. There is no set of books all citizens of the planet are nurtured by, know, recognize; no system of meaning flashed recognizably from culture to culture; no way of perceiving, the same for all. Ignorant armies clash by night.

What sophisticated American of your acquaintance, after a decade of bloodshed and psychic wastage, has read a single Vietnamese philosopher, can quote a line of Vietnamese poetry, or hum a traditional Vietnamese lullaby? What do we know, we who have studied the humanities, about the humanity of the Vietnamese? Or of a hundred other cultures?

What we in American universities call "the humanities" is still mainly (although changes are occurring) "Western civilization"—and mostly derived from the culture of upper-class, Northern European civilization, at that. Under the grand title "humanities," signifying every human being and every cultural tradition, we commonly mean something ethnocentric, even ideological.

I do not wish to minimize the power, the authority, or the splendor of Western traditions. Of these, too, even many who are college-educated are embarrassingly innocent. Few feel the authority of the past, achievement won at the cost of blood. Most live in the thin and distracting present.

There cannot be humanities without roots. The humanities *are* wisdom hard-won through the ages, as constant and continuous as the appearance, evolution, and possible extinction of the species. (World mythologists often anticipate beginning, middle, and end—an apocalyptic close; a light rounded by two sleeps; a darkness, between two lights.)

Westerners cannot pretend to be everyman, universal, encompassing in ourselves the experience of all others in every other culture. We are who we are. In feeling (as it were) the lining of the belly in which we are carried, we can perhaps come to see others, different from us, more distinctly. We are not in the axial center of world history. Our culture is one of history's sub-plots. There are other actors.

The great conflicts of the present are not always due to competition over scarce resources; more often, they are the working out of cultural antagonisms. In the Near East, in Ireland, in Southeast Asia, between Latin America and the United States, suffering is deepened by ancient cultural disharmonies: by quite different images of what is human, good, true, beautiful. The humanity of one culture is denied by another.

Perceptions are rooted in cultural histories; so also are sympathies, antipathies, and the like. We need to learn the limits of our own cultural histories, and the full shape of the cultural histories of others, if we do not wish to contribute to the Babel of politics. How can there be peace, if methods of transcultural perception do not even exist?

The creation of a worldwide, planetary conception and practice of the humanities is a major task of humanists of this generation.

How shall we accomplish it?

In the first place, many technicians and experts—in family planning, in agriculture, in economics—have come face-to-face with cultural resistance. They have been in situations in which techniques for technical solutions were available—but were not used, or were used to odd effect. The force of cultural reality is sometimes far better known to non-humanists than to humanists. Questions might well be raised for the humanities by those from other disciplines whose international experience has been intelligent, sensitive, and detailed.

Secondly, humanists need to recognize the new dimensions of their profession. Literature is not solely English literature, or American literature; philosophy does not begin and end with Oxford; "classics" require to be approached multi-culturally — Homer compared not only to modern American experience but to Near Eastern and Far Eastern and other materials. (Tentative efforts have begun, especially in religious studies.)

Thirdly, it is above all in the humanities that Westerners might learn from other cultures. At present we lack systematic plans for the exchange of students and teachers, the translation of classical and contemporary materials, the mutual experience of a larger range of one another's arts, rituals, ceremonies, and disciplines.

Learning to see another culture truly is no easy task. One must learn to accept its good and its bad together: both the power of its classics but also the daily reality of its institutions. The former cannot be understood apart from the latter; neither is wholly expressed by the other.

It is difficult enough to appreciate the classics of one's own culture, or to grasp the true meaning of the social institutions in one's own land. It is not likely that many persons will do so in respect to a culture not their own. On the other hand, a great deal of what we know about ourselves is known only by way of comparison. Each time we penetrate the identity

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RIGHT-TO-REPLY LAWS

THOMAS POWERS

Can a forum for reply be guaranteed in the press?

Everyone in the United States is in favor of a free press, until you get down to particulars. Then qualifications abound. Justice Hugo Black was almost unique in saying that freedom of the press was absolute and anyone could print anything he liked, from libel to pornography, without exception. His fellow justices have generally argued that the First Amendment has its limits, without always being able to agree as to just what they are, and the general public feels that some things—but not always the same things—go too far. Fraudulent advertising, say, or advocating the violent overthrow of the republic. The CIA insists it may censor its agents' memoirs, John Mitchell tried to prevent the *New York Times* from printing the Pentagon Papers, and Herbert Marcuse thinks no one should have the right to advocate racism. When it comes to particulars the press does not want for adversaries.

For all the argument, however, it has generally been accepted in this country that a free press is the bedrock of political liberty. Without the right to say what they think, however intemperate, wrong-headed or wounding, the people would be powerless. The Supreme Court explicitly recognized this in 1964 when it unanimously ruled that public officials are not protected against public accusation, even when false, unless they can prove a "malicious" intent or "reckless disregard" of the facts.

"Debate on public issues should be uninhibited, robust and wide-open," the Court said, "and it may well include vehement, caustic and sometimes unpleasantly sharp attacks on government and public officials." In effect, the Court agreed with Harry Truman that public officials who can't take the heat should stay out of the kitchen.

No ruling is so firm that it is not subject to revision, however, and the present Supreme Court, a different body from the one which ruled so unequivocally ten years ago, is being asked to turn down the temperature. The case currently before the Court is *The Miami Herald Publishing Company v. Pat L. Tornillo* and the law at issue is an alluringly-named Florida statute which grants every candidate for public office a "right to reply," at equal length and in a space of equal prominence, to any newspaper attack on his personal character or public record. At present only one other state, Mississippi, has a "right to reply" statute but a favorable ruling by the Supreme Court would probably bear quick fruit. President Nixon feels that the 1964 decision granted reporters "virtually a license to lie" and Senator John L. McClellan, Democrat, of Arkansas, has already called for a federal "right to reply" statute. No one likes being attacked in print and legislators can be expected to pass any Supreme Court-approved law which would take some of the sting out of public life.

The facts in *Herald v. Tornillo* are quickly established. Tornillo, a Miami union leader, was attacked by the *Herald* when he ran for state representative two years ago. Invoking Florida's "right to reply" statute for only the second time since its passage in 1913, Tornillo demanded space for a reply in the *Herald*'s editorial columns despite the fact that the paper had routinely printed his letters of protest in the past. The *Herald* balked, Tornillo sued and eventually the Florida Supreme Court ruled in his favor, arguing that the law enhanced rather than compromised freedom of the press because it guaranteed the public's "right to know" both sides of public

THOMAS POWERS *received the Pulitzer Prize for national reporting in 1971. His most recent book is* The War at Home *(Grossman), a history of the opposition to the war in Vietnam.*

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controversies. It is the *Herald*'s appeal which is now before the Supreme Court.

The Florida law is misnamed because it does not really grant a candidate a "right" to reply; that is something which the Constitution already protects. Instead, it guarantees a forum for reply, something quite different. The notion is not a new one. Even A.J. Liebling, hardly an opponent of the First Amendment or a friend of officialdom, once wrote that "Freedom of the press is guaranteed only to those who own one." This position has been defended most vigorously by Jerome Barron, a Florida law professor representing Tornillo, who argues that the First Amendment is empty if it does not implement, rather than simply protect, an individual's right to print his views. The Florida court largely accepted Barron's view, citing the steady decline in newspapers and suggesting that the public ought to have a Constitutional right of access to the ones that remain.

This argument is not without merit. There is very little competition between newspapers on the local level and the potential for abuse is obvious. Indianapolis and Manchester, New Hampshire, are cases in point. If the attack on Tornillo had come from a local television station, the FCC's "fairness doctrine" clearly would grant him the right to reply on the attacking station. By extension, then, the argument goes, he ought to have a right to defend himself against the *Herald* in the *Herald*. Theoretically a city could have a dozen newspapers but in fact most Americans now live in one-newspaper towns, which means that an injured aspirant for public office must reply in the paper which attacks him, or he cannot reply at all. Telling him that he is free to start his own paper is like telling a traveler bound for Chicago that he may start his own railroad. It is a freedom without substance, a pious fraud.

The problem with "right to reply" statutes is not so much their ostensible purpose, which is high-minded and unexceptionable, as their effect, which would be to grant for the first time a degree of public control over the editorial content of newspapers. That degree might be small to begin with, but once conceded it would tend to grow. This, of course, would be denied vigorously in any Congressional debate over a "right to reply" statute, but the government also promised, when it finally got a wiretap law in 1968, that it would never dream of tapping or bugging anyone but gangsters and spies. That is the sort of promise which the fox gave to the gingerbread boy, when he offered to ferry him across the river.*

There are two important ways in which "right to reply" statutes would undermine the freedom they are alleged to enhance. The first is that they would tend to become universally applicable. Why, after all, should a "right to reply," or guaranteed forum, be uniquely reserved for candidates for elective office, as stipulated in the Florida statute? Officials, union leaders and anti-war activists are just as vulnerable to newspaper "attack" and could fairly demand an equal right to reply. Clive Barnes can destroy a young playwright with a single review; why shouldn't playwrights have a right to reply in the only space which counts, the theater page of the *Times*? What about all the other people who can claim they have been injured by newspaper comment? The coaches of losing teams, for example, or lawyers defending unpopular Presidents? The list is endless: baby doctors accused of treason, nominees for the Supreme Court who are not confirmed by the Senate, union leaders convicted of murder, Secretaries of Defense charged with war crimes, the builders of aircraft which fall out of the sky, press secretaries ridiculed for dismissing lies as "inoperative," Jesuits charged with anti-Semitism, generals who do not win wars, the mothers of assassins. Presumably they, too, are protected by the First Amendment. They are in no position to start newspapers. Why should they be denied the guaranteed forum for reply which Florida now grants to every candidate for a local school board? It is a short step, after all, from candidates to elected officials, and from elected to appointed officials, and thence to everyone else.

The rule of universal applicability also means that a "right to reply" to *newspaper* attack would quickly be extended to every other sort of periodical, from trade journals to diocesan newspapers, and ultimately even to books. The number of magazines is diminishing, too, and it would hardly be consistent with the First Amendment to grant the ones that remain a unique freedom to print criticism which was denied to newspapers, or to expose officials to attack from one quarter while protecting them from another. Magazines are more intimate than newspapers and the threat to free speech inherent in "right to reply" statutes is somehow clearer in their case. Would it enhance freedom of the press to require Catholic magazines to print the views of abortionists? Must the *New Leader* provide a forum for Stalinists? Should Lester Maddox have a right to space in *The Race Relations Reporter?* Must the *Audubon Magazine* offer its gorgeous pages to Western Senators who favor the poisoning of coyotes? Many small magazines of opinion are sustained only by conviction. They could hardly survive a situation in which half of every deficit dollar was a free gift to their bitterest opponents.

The second danger grows out of the first. Who is to decide what constitutes an "attack," its precise length and the prominence of its position in the paper? Would an attack on "Congress" for dragging its feet on impeachment be answerable by each and every Representative? Who would answer attacks on "the public" for its indifference to freedom of the press, or on "teachers" for their insensitivity to the richness of ghetto English, or on "the oil industry" or "the automotive industry"?

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* The too-trusting gingerbread boy, it will be remembered, started out on the fox's back, and ended inside his stomach.

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If every citizen were not to be the sole judge of whether or not he had been attacked, at what length and how prominently, then some public institution would have to act as arbiter. Its power would be very great indeed. If there were no appeal of its decisions its power would be totalitarian, and if there were appeal there would be no end to them. Almost every story in every publication would be the potential focus of a legal struggle as bitter as a custody fight. The purpose of "right to reply" statutes might be to guarantee a forum for the voiceless, but their effect would be to establish a degree—and inevitably a growing degree—of public control over the press. It is not hard to see who would benefit. Would a "right to reply" board be less instinctively sympathetic to the President in its rulings than the Internal Revenue Service officials who praised him for the neatness of his tax returns? A man who would believe that, as the Duke of Wellington said in another context, would believe anything.

"Right to reply" advocates misunderstand—unless they understand only too well—the purpose of the First Amendment, which is to protect the freedom of citizens to publish their views, not to guarantee their fairness. The men who wrote the Constitution were hardly indifferent to such matters, but they concluded that fairness, like moderation and wisdom, could not be imposed upon political debate. Any attempt to do so, they felt, would inevitably favor one faction over another, with the most likely beneficiary the faction in power. "Fairness" is not the object of political struggle, after all, but only a means, an intellectual style, a tone intended to persuade. Political partisans can and do resort to ridicule, invective and exhortation as well as to reason. It is hardly fair to say of Gerald Ford that he has played too much football without his helmet. Perhaps in strict fact he *always* wore his helmet. Nixon was not being fair in 1952 when he attacked the Democrats as the party of "Communism, corruption and Korea." Barry Goldwater was unfair in 1964 when he called Lyndon Johnson "the biggest faker in the United States" and Bobby Kennedy was unfair in 1968 when he said Johnson was "calling upon the darker impulses in the American spirit." Unfair attack is the common coin of politics. The lack of "fairness" may work for or against an advocate; that is a tactical question. But if his freedom to speak and publish is to have substance, the choice of words must be his alone.

The legal arguments in favor of "right to reply" statutes are so strained, and the consequences of their acceptance so clear, that it is hard to see how the Supreme Court could accept them. And yet . . . it might. There is a lot of hostility toward the press in this country, for the same reason there is a lot of hostility toward city hall, General Motors and the Internal Revenue Service, because they are huge, indifferent and inaccessible. Arrogance is the least congenial of human failings. Attacks on freedom of the press get as far as they do, which is farther all the time, because a lot of people would like to see the *Times* taken down a peg or two and either do not see or do not care that their own freedom would inevitably be compromised as well.

It is unfortunate that the press must be the chief defender of the press in these matters; it makes freedom of the press seem somehow self-serving. The *Times* may argue that it is defending the people's freedom in defending its own but this has a specious ring to it, like Charlie Wilson's assurance in the 1950s that what's good for General Motors is good for the country. Things were different in the 18th century when starting a newspaper was a week's work for a handful of men; citizens then were jealous of their right to publish unimpeded because it was a right they might reasonably expect to exercise. But in the age of media giants like *Time-Life,* CBS, the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post,* when starting a newspaper is beyond all but centi-millionaires, it is easy to see freedom of the press as little more than an institutional prerogative. This ignores the importance of small papers and magazines, many of which have an influence greater than their circulation, but it is an opinion widely held all the same.

The best cure for the ills of democracy, it is said, is more democracy, and the best cure for the failings of newspapers would be more newspapers. Let a hundred flowers bloom! But how are we to start more newspapers, when the necessary investment is in the tens of millions and the chances of financial success are problematic at best? That, as they say, is another subject altogether. In the meantime we must protect the independence of the newspapers that survive, even as we criticize their performance, because if they cannot publish without let or hindrance, who can?

JOHN C. HANLEY

CONFRONTATION

Easing my mower underneath the bough
Too slender to support a cat, I have
Within my reach a robin's nest. I see
The setting mother. Seeing me, she flees
The nest. She implicates herself in leaves,
Reaches an altitude and, taking flight,
Vents overpowering fear in small-scale swoops
And darts that counterfeit attack on me.

My pity out of touch with signals, I
Act out the part of guilt and back away.
I pull my mower toward me, thinking now
Of others who could not read past
Disguises circumstances forced upon
Starts of contrition, longing, love.

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A CITY OF TWO FACES

The well-tended neighborhoods of Washington have never seemed more radiant than they do during this Spring of misfortune. The blossoms seem to be lasting longer. The great monuments to Washington, Jefferson and Lincoln never glittered more attractively in the sun. Never with more spirit do children ride the merry-go-round on the Mall, whose grass has recovered from the tramplings of feet of men and women who marched into town in the 1960s seeking to be admitted into America. And the Capitol dome seems larger than ever, almost cathedral-like in its giant-ness in this May of 1974.

It is understandable, then, that the *Washington Post,* itself emerging from a strike of its editorial and commercial employees, suggested in an editorial: ". . . the city seemed to be smiling once again." This observation is about as accurate as is the fanciful recitation of the red-coated guides who show tourists, laden with cameras and children, around the historic passageways of the Capitol. Henry Adams, who demonstrated a sharp eye for the reality of Washington, would surely have suggested incongruities in this surface view of Washington, a political Eden now turned a Gethsemane.

The governmental and affluent residential neighborhoods are, of course, well-tended—as they would be in such a City of easy virtue. But they mislead, like the false-fronts of villages Catherine the Great was shown in another duplicious time and place. The fortress-like facades of government buildings deceive twice over. They hide the daily production of small and large deceits that are directed against the governed. They, too, obscure the blocks of burned commercial and residential buildings left standing since they were plundered during the riots following Martin Luther King's assassination six years ago. Grand plan after grand plan nourishes hopes of the ghetto homeless, but the gap between promise and fulfillment remains. Along downtown Seventh Street, the boarded buildings await renewal, while along the sidewalks and into the streets themselves winos wine, dealers deal and pimps pander as wide-eyed children watch—no suggestion of which is found in any of the pretty guide-books and along the routes of prettied tour buses.

The city government, incompetently managed now by blacks as it was once for 150 years by whites, is disabled by Congressional intervention and headed by a "mayor" who makes Abe Beame seem like a giant among men. Where housing is needed, the business community, whose members live in suburban Maryland and Virginia, would place a white-elephant civic center to match three miles away the huge, debt-laden municipal stadium that now stands idle except for a few weeks each fall when the local professional football team, the Redskins, plays. The Circus Maximus was used more efficiently and more frequently.

The admired blossoms persist this year, perhaps to detract from the Watergate as it breeds its own political serpents—distrust, dismay and disillusionment that will work against incumbents this fall, whether they be good, bad, or indifferent. No amount of expunging of bad campaign practices by legislation will provide the "nay-sayers," the Cabinet officers and aides, necessary to prevent abuses of power and responsibility. With one most recent exception, there have been no Nora Helmers walking out of government and slamming the doors behind them since the Truman Presidency. Harmony is the word—and, if you must leave, go on tip-toe.

But aren't the Republicans different from Democrats? Yes, Scott Fitzgerald might have said to rephrase himself when he replied to Hemingway about the rich, they're in office. At heart, the two major parties revere permanence and property, although the Democratic party is owned by the myth of program to the extent it cannot think of the future in any other terms except more of the same. Program upon program; agency upon agency; good money after bad.

In this sense, each shares a common ailment—the disease of orthodoxy conveying a suggestion that there exists in some respects a one-party state. And, historically in the United States, out of this condition in an aggravated stage has been born the third party, short-lived though it may have become. The third party sustains Lincoln Steffens' argument in "The Shame of the Cities" that reform is never enough—structural changes are needed to root out, e.g., economic inequality. But, of course, to transform economic foundations of a society into ones more equitable is, perhaps, the most hazardous enterprise one can undertake. Because, therefore, New Dealers and their descendants protect the legislative legacies of the 1930s and 1940s, they, not the planters of the South, New or Old, are becoming the Bourbons of American politics.

"The great creative work of a federal agency must be done in the first decade of its existence, if it is to be done at all," Justice William O. Douglas writes in his most recent book, *Go East, Young Man.* After that, Douglas continues, an agency is "likely to become a prison of bureaucracy and of the inertia demanded by the Establishment of any respected agency."

Douglas recounts that he suggested to President

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Franklin Roosevelt that any agency be abolished 10 years after it is established, no later. "Roosevelt would always roar with delight at that suggestion," Douglas notes, "and, of course, never did anything about it." The emphasis within departments and agencies of the Executive Branch, Douglas appears to be suggesting, becomes henceforth one of technique—substituting efficiency of systems for the experience of men.

Within the Congress, matters seem no better at the time, despite the ferment for constructive change within the more unruly, less elegant of the two bodies, the House of Representatives.

A newcomer to the Congress from one of the Southwestern states says the place reminds him of a Spanish gypsy curse: *Entre disputados te veas,* or, may you find yourself surrounded by legislators. The "liberals," he noted (being one himself) are generally a shiftless sanctimonious lot who speak of secular saintliness. Nixon men are mercenaries for men of property, but liberals are often charlatans of emotion. One remembers Jessica Mitford's suggestion in her writing on prisons. In her book, *Kind and Usual Punishment,* Ms. Mitford suggests that "liberal" rehabilitation programs and newer prisons may only be sugar-coatings of a poisonous pill.

Nevertheless, this Spring, too, Senators and Representatives are in a better humor. The young men and women applying for summer internships are polite and say "Sir." The young men wear ties and the women dresses and both talk about Jay Gatsby and East Egg. The humor runs to quips about how many goldfish can streakers swallow while jammed into a phone-booth. Ergo, the Republic is safe again. Duty, not dissent, characterizes these students.

Outside, in the real world, inflation gallops ahead at 11 percent and production falls. Economists call it "stag-flation" and then concede they don't know what to do. And the other day Walter Heller, acknowledging his bafflement, made a little joke about an economist being a man who marries Elizabeth Taylor for her money.

The great monuments of Washington do seem to glitter more attractively than ever, but within, as if in reproach to contemporary men, are chiseled into the walls formulations of sterner men living in the days when the Republic they knew, however beset by difficulties, was not a "soft-state."

On Theodore Roosevelt Island, in the middle of the Potomac River within sight of the Lincoln Memorial, is a tablet bearing an observation of the man who sought to use the Presidency as a bully-pulpit:

> "Only those are fit to live who do not fear
> to die, and none are fit to die who have
> shrunk from the job of life, and the duty of life."

Automobiles are not allowed on the Island.

SISYPHUS

PAIR O' DOXIES

THE SCREEN

The central character in Jean Eustache's *The Mother and the Whore* is neither the mother nor the whore, but Alexandre (Jean-Pierre Leaud). For that matter, the young woman referred to in the title as the "mother" isn't really a mother either, nor is the "whore" a whore. In fact, the first thing to be said about *The Mother and the Whore* is that it's the sort of movie that is what it isn't —one of those French films where nothing is what it appears to be and everything is really something else. (Only the French can make such amusing movies out of such contrary ideas.) Certainly Alexandre isn't what he appears to be in the least—not for a minute, don't you believe it.

What Alexandre appears to be is a remorseless, and relentless, Lothario. In the opening sequences of the film, for instance, he sneaks out of the bed he shares with one woman, borrows a car from another woman, drives off to a third woman, and then, as he is taking his leave from the last of these, strikes up a conversation with a fourth woman in order to ask for her telephone number. Thus he runs the gamut in one day from his "mother"—the first woman, Marie (Bernadette Lafont), who gives him room and board—to his "whore"—the last woman, Veronika (Françoise Lebrun), who lets him make love to her after one or two casual dates. The other woman he has made overtures to this day, Gilberte (Isabel Weingarten), becomes just that, the "other woman," even though she is the one he has asked to marry him. Since she is the only one he has declared serious intentions towards, there is at least poetic justice in the fact that she turns out to be the only one who wants nothing to do with him.

And yet, even the intentions that seem undeniable in the proposal Alexandre has made come to seem less and less likely as the film progresses. Alexandre *claims* that he has proposed to Gilberte to make her decide between himself and another young man. What he can't stand, he says, is indecision. But by the time we get to the other end of the film, it is clear that it is Alexandre who is indecisive. To make him choose between them, Alexandre's mother and his whore have by the conclusion of the film done everything conceivable, including making love to each other. At last, after innumerable "decisions and revisions which a minute will reverse," he again pops the question. Since this is where we came in, it may not seem that much progress has been made. But the first time we saw him propose, he acted with such insouciance, such composure; now he is in such a state of agitation that he collapses on the floor afterwards. He knows he will be accepted this time as surely as he must

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This May

WHETHER IT BE problems of Watergate and of impeachment, inflation, religious reform, pollution and waste of natural resources, the moral stance of our consumer-oriented society, the Third World here and abroad or whatever, *Commonweal* contributes to the discussion through the outspoken views of writers eminent in their respective fields. Among such current contributors to our pages you will find: Daniel A. Degnan, Paul Ramsey, Abigail McCarthy, Russell Gibbons, Isidore Silver, Katharine Byrne, Bruce Cook, Philip Berrigan, Gabriel Moran, Jordan Bishop, Michael Novak, Margaret Carlan, Peter Steinfels and Gary MacEoin.

In addtion *Commonweal* provides highly readable comment on important current books, by such perceptive reviewers as: Saul Maloff, Richard P. McBrien, Gerald Weales, Anne Fremantle, John Ratté, Eugene C. Kennedy, Colin Westerbeck, Jr., Elliott Wright, Ronald Christ, Quincy Howe, Mark Taylor, Victor Ferkiss, Louis Dupré, Arthur A. Cohen, Claire Hahn, Carlos Baker, Kenneth Davis, John Heidenry, Fred Hechinger, Bruce Vawter, Dennis O'Brien, Irving Malin and Margaret Wimsatt.

This month we are offering a bonus to new subscribers in addition to their trial subscription: the 50th Anniversary Year issue, which has just been cited by the Catholic Press Association meeting in Denver, Colorado, as the Best Special Issue of 1973. The judges commended the issue for its "fine journalistic flair that is typical of this fine magazine." You may obtain your copy by utilizing the coupon below.

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have known he would be turned down the first time.

I said before that *The Mother and the Whore* is the sort of movie that is what it isn't. Although one doesn't want to over-clarify so lucid a remark, I might add that this is literally so in a sense. Like so much French filmmaking of the last fifteen years, Eustache's film is a reaction against other kinds of filmmaking. It is a film whose epic length of three and a half hours circumscribes only the most ordinary and lackluster of events, a proposal awkwardly come to by a reluctant young man. In its rambling unstructured approach to this non-event, moreover, the film offers us no camera virtuosity. The photography is unadorned and monotonous (that is to say, mono-tone-ous, but not therefore insipid as well), and the editing is functional rather than expressive. In a film in which people sit in cafes and sparsely furnished rooms and talk—a film that is purposely made as the antithesis of all carefully crafted action films—there is hardly any opportunity for stylized direction.

But like other French directors in whose footsteps he follows (especially Eric Rohmer, whose *My Night at Maud's* Eustache's film resembles from its plot to its lighting), Eustache manages to make his rebellion against other people's production values into an art all its own. He fits his style to his subject. Since the subject is the affairs of unexceptional people, Eustache employs an extreme naturalism in portraying them. He tries to discover his film in loosely directed situations rather than shape it by imposing himself on his characters' relationships. The only style possible here is that which comes to exist in the characters' own personalities. Between them, Eustache and his cast easily render these characters appealing enough that we can bear with them for so long a time without ever being bored with them too.

COLIN L. WESTERBECK, JR.

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CHAD WALSH

KNOCK

Then knock on any door.
And some will open, some will not. Be poised
Even to either answer—open and shut are Janus
As modes of speech. And each
Leads to another door and one knock more.

Walk through, turn back, keep going. Forget the flashing faces
That briefly flush or bleach.
You have a destination or had it once.
Somewhere your will is written down and still is binding.
Time browns but not erases.

The even locks, the jail's long corridor,
St. Paul, Damascus, and a godly, thorough blinding.
One door, one only opened.
But if no door is worth your search and finding,
Then close your eyes in darkness. Knock on *any* door.

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an exchange of views

'Moral Consistency and Abortion'

St. Louis, Mo.

To the Editors: That there is a dichotomy between the stands of some Catholic legislators on the taking of life by abortion, and the taking of life in the Vietnam war, or by capital punishment seems to be demonstrated in your article of March 22nd, entitled "Moral Consistency and the Abortion Issue." But there are two difficulties with the argument this article pursues, one minor and peripheral, the other major and disastrous.

The minor difficulty arises from the fact that the statistics are reversible, and will show that those who are anti-war, and anti-capital punishment are pro-abortion. This leaves us with no guides or standards that can be applied, seemingly, to either viewpoint.

The major difficulty arises from the fact that the pro-abortionists (and probably most of the anti-abortionists) fail to discern that there is a consistent moral principle followed by the anti-abortionists despite the fact that they may be pro-life in one instance and anti-life in another. The crucial point is not that abortion is permitted, or is possible, but that abortion-on-demand is permitted.

The abortion-on-demand doctrine forbids the community to decide when, and under what conditions, a fetus may be aborted. This fact is effectively demonstrated by the Supreme Court decision in Roe vs. Wade which made unconstitutional the laws of all fifty states, whether those laws concerning abortion were considered liberal or restrictive.

Under the Supreme Court decision it not only became irrelevant, but impossible, for communities represented by their legislators to debate the issue any longer. To remove from the community, whether state or national, all right to legislate on what is admitted to be a serious moral action leaves a bewildered society—a society which is anarchistic, at least regarding abortion. In fact John Hart Ely in the *Yale Law Review* on April, 1973, can find no constitutional connection to the decision, not even one remotely implied, and this gives him serious concern.

It is a great deal different for a legislature to determine that abortion is permissible, and to state the conditions under which it is permissible, than to allow the individual to abort for any reason, or even a whim, without any authority in the legislature to restrain her in any manner. Just as it is a great deal different for the legislature to determine the conditions under which capital punishment shall occur, than to allow the family of the victim, for example, to make the *sole* decision as to whether a killer, shall suffer capital punishment. The difference is that anarchism is prevented, and the community decides what situation is so serious that it requires the taking of human life.

The point that should be in question in this country is not whether abortion should be allowed, but who shall determine if, and when, abortion can be allowed. An orderly society can abdicate its responsibility in no instance of this seriousness by making it possible for the individual to act without reason —particularly when such abdication is forced on a society by declaring it to be incompetent.

The right to legislate on abortion is society's responsibility. To argue in public debate on the conditions under which abortion can occur is the responsibility of the citizen. It may be that abortion should be allowed in all the instances that pro-abortion groups demand. It may even be that the mother alone, and by herself, might be allowed to judge whether her situation meets the conditions, laid down by the legislature, under which abortions are allowed. But this avoids anarchy, because society still has ultimate control.

How can the legislature be declared incompetent to legislate on the taking of life, on the standards to be met? Samuel H. Beer said in a *Center Magazine* article: "The liberating ethos of modern culture does seem to point to some ultimate non-standard. . . ." Members of society have difficulty in living together with any sort of coherence where it is no longer possible for them, through any legislative process, to look for a remedy for what they consider a moral illness. It is too simple to say that those who are against abortion do not have to abort. Our country comprises all its citizens, and through its democratic process all segments of society should have hope that their viewpoints might prevail. But how can the statement that "the anti-abortionists don't have to abort" compensate for the despair and helplessness that follows when an issue can no longer even be debated? Can the offended group rationalize its position so that it can continue to live in such a society?

It was not enough to say to many Germans in World War II that they did not have to take part in the slaughter of the Jews; it was impossible for those Germans to live in a society that condoned such action, with no chance given to protest. Our democratic society has its uniqueness, its expression, only in the *processes* by which it operates. If we remove the process we remove hope, and we impose bitterness and despair.

No matter how liberal or restrictive the conditions under which a legislature may allow abortion, nevertheless the right to abort must be granted by the legislature, and not be available on-demand.

RICHARD T. STITH, JR.

Chestnut Hill, Mass.

To the Editors: It is not at all surprising that the authors of the article "Moral Consistency and the Abortion Issue" [Mar. 22] found that the attitudes toward abortion, war, capital punishment

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and related issues can be understood far better in terms of political and religious conservatism, or liberalism as the case may be, than in terms of a consistent application of the right-to-life principle. To be anti-abortion is a conservative posture these days. So is support for capital punishment and for strict treatment of criminals. So was support for the Vietnam war. One is liberal if he is for abortion, against capital punishment and for a humane treatment of prisoners. It was liberal to be against the war. That is the present or recent political climate. It is clear that this situation raises some ethical questions and I am grateful to the authors for having pointed up some of them. I am afraid, however, that I can not share their position.

One can complain that the anti-abortion forces are not consistent in that they do not apply their right-to-life principle to such situations as war and capital punishment—to take the most obvious issues. The question then arises, of course, why not complain about the inconsistency of those who oppose capital punishment and massive killing in modern warfare and do not apply that ethical concern to the abortion issue. Once one claims that the right-to-life principle as applied to abortion should be applied also to capital punishment and to war, one should be willing to turn around and oppose abortion because one is against killing, be it in war, in a gas chamber, or in an operating room. That would be, it would seem, moral consistency. The difficulty, of course, is that this would lead to a less liberal position on the abortion issue. The liberal is against killing in war and the gas chamber, but finds abortion less objectionable. The conservative is against abortion but finds capital punishment less objectionable. Thus, both the conservative and the liberal position appear to be morally inconsistent.

The way out would be, as suggested in the article, to make a distinction between pre- and post-natal life. Taking this route leads the pro-abortionist to define prenatal life as not quite human. The anti-abortionist tends to emphasize the innocence and defenselessness of the unborn and insists on its being human. And this is, of course, what the argument really comes down to. The pro-abortionist tries to argue that abortion is a special case, not really killing. But if the critics of the right-to-life position refuse the validity of the distinction between pre- and post-natal life, implicit in that position and making possible a qualitative dfference between the two kinds of killing, how can they justify making a similar distinction, be it, admittedly, for a different purpose: to show that prenatal life is not quite human? They can do so only by singling out the abortion issue as a special ethical problem, having to do with the human quality of the fetus, the definition of killing, etc. Their objection to the inconsistency of the right-to-life position is acceptable only if they are willing to declare that abortion is not killing. Then the demand for protection of human life which leads to rejection of war and capital punishment does not apply to the fetus.

But in the same way the anti-abortionist or right-to-life person can argue that in certain cases his right-to-life principle does not apply. He can say that certain criminals have forfeited their right to life and that, therefore, capital punishment is morally acceptable, even indicated. Capital punishment is a special case to be treated on its own merits. So is the question of killing in war. These are questions that have to be dealt with in the light of the right-to-life principle but as having particular features.

What this amounts to is that the requirement of moral consistency as presupposed in the article is ill taken. It is by no means clear that the problems of abortion, war and capital punishment, even though they all have to do in some way with the right to life, are identical problems. Specific questions have to be asked with regard to each problem that do not apply to the others. The killing that takes place in abortion is not the same as in an execution. The argument that the anti-abortionists have less of a case because they are not equally strongly opposed to capital punishment or war is specious. It does not hold. It is like the argument heard a few years ago, that we should not make so much noise about abortion because we were killing people in the war all the time anyhow.

This is, of course, not to say that I do not deplore the conservative stance taken by anti-abortionists on issues such as capital punishment and the Vietnam war. Personally I find abortion very hard to justify. I find capital punishment repulsive. Having lived under the Nazi occupation for five years, I think I know what war is all about and have reasons to hate it. But since I have the Allied liberating forces to thank for my life, I find it difficult to take a radical pacifist position. War may be necessary sometimes. And I can see that there may be circumstances wherein killing is the lesser evil. I can also see that there may be situations in which abortion is the only solution. Generally I would tend to take a right-to-life position on all these issues. As little killing as possible. But I would still maintain that the ethical considerations in these various situations are not identical. The right to life is only one of many.

If the authors of the article on Moral Consistency and the Abortion Issue find a whole set of various explanatory elements underlying the voting patterns in Pennsylvania relating to abortion, capital punishment and the Vietnam war, then I would say that is not only not surprising, but should be that way. While deploring the lack of moral concern with regard to Vietnam suggested by the data, I do not think that the question of the war can be reduced to a right-to-life issue. A better grasp of the best interests of the nations involved in that conflict, more respect for the autonomy of the Vietnamese people, a better awareness of the futility and silliness of the crusade against Communism, and other such considerations should have played a role in the formation of the attitudes toward the war. The war was wrong, and therefore that killing was not justified. But then what is at stake is not so much the right-to-life principle as the justification of killing

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in a war situation. Similarly, an awareness of the irrational vengefulness that basically supports capital punishment, the lack of correspondence between the inherent fallibility of human justice, crime and punishment, the apparent ineffectiveness of the death penalty as a deterrent are among the considerations which, beside the right-to-life principle, should inform our judgment on capital punishment. The traditionally given reasons in support of capital punishment do not in fact justify the killing. But, again, in question is not the right-to-life principle as such, but the justification of a specific kind of killing.

Seen in this light abortion is just another typical situation in which the basic question of the justification of killing arises. The structure of the situation is different from war and capital punishment. Now we have to do not with criminals or enemies but with unborn life. There is no threat to national security or reason to fear the repetition of serious crime, but unwanted pregnancies and shattered careers. I do not need to describe the problem-situation in detail. But it should be clear that the kind of moral argument that deals adequately with this type of situation must be specific to the problem at hand. The question is whether and under what conditions taking the life of the unborn is justified. The anti-abortionist tends to argue that no such justification is possible. Others argue that it can, under circumstances, be justified. Again others redefine the situation so that no real killing is involved in abortion. But my point is that the abortion problem is a specific one which has to be dealt with on its own terms. And it is quite possible that on this issue one comes out with a a position more restrictive with regard to the justification of killing than in the case of capital punishment or killing in war. The moral arguments are different.

I am not against consistency in moral argument. I even feel in sympathy with the argument as developed in the article under discussion. But upon reflection, I have to say that it is lofty rhetoric but poor ethical reasoning. It simplifies a complex moral situation, demanding consistency on too abstract a level to deal adequately with the complexities of the problems as they present themselves to us. At any rate, if I were to take this kind of consistency seriously, I would have difficulty in not seeing inconsistency in the position that opposes both killing in war and capital punishment, yet sees no problem in abortion.

(REV.) THEODORE M. STEEMAN, O.F.M.
Dept. of Theology, Boston College

Philadelphia Pa.

To the Editors: Some comments re "Moral Consistency and the Abortion Issue," March 22 issue.

The article is tough to briefly comment on because its rhetoric is far better than the writers' logic; the article is disjointed and rambling, not analogous regarding its main points, incorrect in certain matters, and misleading.

The reason for all this is obvious: The writers did not say what they really mean, they beat around the bush. Ergo, their research was almost nil, their examples woefully weak, their arguments limp, their conclusions—if you can call ambiguities conclusions—fell flat.

I hope the writers never discover that Cardinal Krol has conducted religious services in prisons, reformatories, because they obviously would assume he "has manifested a steadfast moral solidarity" with the inmates' acts. (Incidentally, Cardinal Krol did not invite President Nixon to address the National Catholic Education Association.)

Where would the writers have a clergyman draw the line on whom to pray with? Only with sinners? Only with saints? Only with governors or Presidents or candidates of one particular party? Where?

If the writers had been interested in doing their homework, I would gladly have supplied them with the Cardinal's statements on related subjects—as Archbishop of Philadelphia, or on behalf of both U.S. bishops' conferences of which he is president or as head of the Pennsylvania bishops' conference.

On the death penalty: being for capital punishment and against abortion is not automatic inconsistency. The unborn child is the most innocent, defenseless among us; the sentenced person may have taken the life of another.

Furthermore, the Fifth Commandment in the original Hebrew clearly means "Thou Shalt Not Murder" and —at least by Old Testament norms— the book of Genesis states, "If anyone sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed."

However, I hasten to add that Genesis only seems to provide some justification for capital punishment, and I am not arguing for or against capital punishment, simply pointing out that the automatic inconsistency in question does not apply.

It certainly also does not apply to Catholics on preservation and enhancement of life after birth. Here, too, the writers, one of whom is a specialist in community health work, did not do their homework. I suggest they look into Catholic Relief Services, largest voluntary relief organization in the world; the Catholic Bishops' Human Development Campaign, a non-denominational, self-help anti-poverty project; contributions by Cardinal Krol's Commission on Human Relations to victims of the 1972 flood in Pennsylvania and the commission's widely-known, widely-appreciated help for welfare recipients when their welfare payments were delayed by the state legislature in July of 1973; Catholic Social Services of the Philadelphia Archdiocese, the largest network of private social-service facilities in Pennsylvania; the $32-35 million in vital social services for the underprivileged provided annually in this archdiocese by Catholics to the *total* community.

In short, the Catholic people don't just engage in dialog, they are doers—in the most beautiful ways—where the unborn and the born are concerned.

ED DEVENNEY
Director, News Office
Archdiocese of Philadelphia

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Reply

Our critics either did not understand or refuse to accept the limited purpose of our investigation, which was to test the consistency of views of anti-abortionists based on the hypothesis that the principle of the "right to life" could explain their position on abortion. We were quite explicit that inconsistencies might well be found on the same range of topics for pro-abortionists, but what legitimates our more restricted analysis is precisely the frequent assertion by anti-abortionists that the sanctity of human life determines their attitudes toward abortion. If this *were* the controlling principle, it should spill over to attitudes toward post-fetal life and welfare. Our test of the voting of Pennsylvania legislators indicates an *inverse* relationship between support for fetal and post-fetal life on the part of anti-abortionist legislators, which would seem to call into question the "right to life" as the value and principle controlling their attitudes toward *fetal* life itself. We concluded that a complex set of other, traditional values were probably exercising a predominating influence.

Our critics stress the unique innocence of the fetus as the basis for a sharp distinction between pre- and post-natal life. This is a matter that we partly bypassed, and still do, on the ground that many anti-abortionists rest their case on the sanctity of *all* human life, not on the innocence of particular forms. Furthermore, innocence is a matter of degree, and would not appear a sufficient basis for explaining the marked differences in voting patterns shown on anti-abortion legislation and that dealing with war and human welfare which we found. Finally, as regards attitudes toward war, war has shown an accelerating tendency to victimize increasing numbers of innocent bystanders. The impersonal, automated warfare employed in Vietnam, with "free-fire zones" and high-level bombing, should have been anathema to those focusing on the probable victimization of innocents, including fetuses (many of which were destroyed inside pregnant female bodies incinerated in bombing raids or shot down at Mylai and elsewhere). The frequent lack of concern for *these* innocents cannot be explained, as Father Steeman suggests, by the fact that the problems involved in these instances are too complex; on the contrary, the principle of the "sanctity of human life" appears to be simply overwhelmed by nationalism and anti-Communist ideology.

Mr. Devenney's criticism of our claim that Cardinal Krol had exhibited a steadfast moral solidarity with President Nixon is disingenuous. On the eve of the 1972 Republican Convention, a conservative *Philadelphia Bulletin* columnist, Adrian Lee, quoted Cardinal Krol as saying that "we [he and Richard Nixon] share a common concern over the depletion . . . of the religious and moral convictions which govern human behavior" ("Cardinal Krol . . . and the Right to Life," August 23, 1972). Neither Mr. Devenney nor Cardinal Krol chose to repudiate this explicit expression of moral solidarity. Mr. Devenney makes one minor substantive point. We slipped in saying that the Cardinal himself invited Nixon to speak before the National Catholic Education Association. But the President was invited, and his remarks (on educational policy) were lauded without qualifications by Cardinal Krol. This was at a time when the President was under intense and world-wide critical attack for escalating the bombing in Indochina. His appearance at this moment before the Association was a political act, an expression of solidarity, that could not have occurred if Cardinal Krol had thought President Nixon's accelerated destruction of Indochinese was morally unacceptable.

ROBERT EDELSTEIN
EDWARD S. HERMAN
MARY W. HERMAN

ROBERT PAWLOWSKI

VOICES

Voices always come out of bedroom walls;
Sometimes from walls I've never slept beside:
What now? What now? they ask, until it sounds
As though people I know are living inside
Them, breathing, rustling about, waiting for me
To work myself in.

But who can trust
This way of saying things and take the leap
To getting lost in dry vaults? The requests
Are too mechanical; like love, their language speaks
Itself and dies under the touch of hands,
Leaving my fingers opened at the cracks
And holes of air, holding nothing—the last
Sound already by.

Then who is not
Reminded of other friends he's tried to reach;
Someone, say, who is far away, asleep
Or merely mute; such friends who understand
But for these reasons of their own, leave
Me empty caves to search, wherein I've called
And called out names until I was assured
I was a lonely man who must remain
Apart from himself, and wait for his hands
To change the sounds of this life.

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FAITH AND THE AMERICAN EDEN

ROBERT T. HANDY

Dissent in American Religion

EDWIN SCOTT GAUSTAD

University of Chicago Press, $6.95

American Religious Thought: A History

WILLIAM A. CLEBSCH

University of Chicago Press, $10.95

The New Heavens and New Earth: Political Religion in America

CUSHING STROUT

Harper & Row, $12.50

Many reviewers of Sydney E. Ahlstrom's massive *A Religious History of the American People* (1972) have observed that it is not so much a promise of things to come in American religious historiography as the ripe fruit of a significant *genre*—the one-volume overall survey. Now that Ahlstrom has produced his *magnum opus*, that job will not have to be done again soon. Yet his work showed how many unanswered questions there are, and disclosed many areas for further work. The three books under review here do tackle in fresh and readable ways timely themes that enrich and deepen our understanding of the complex past and present of religion in America. They point the way ahead.

The compact contributions of Gaustad and Clebsch are the first volumes in the new *Chicago History of American Religion* series, edited by Martin E. Marty. Gaustad has eschewed the approach of the consensus church historians who have centered largely on the major bodies, their convergences toward broad middle positions, and their role in society. Instead he focuses on the dissenters—those who have chosen not to work within the system but who have sought to reform religion. *Dissent in American Religion* seeks to see its subjects for what they have been without either idealization or denigration. Some have displayed pompous arrogance and others an heroic and sacrificial spirit; some have threatened the survival of civilization, but in resisting a tyrannous majority others have been its restorers. There have been many dissenters of greatly varying types in American religion; a real achievement of the author has been to bring a very wide range of highly individualistic persons and movements into a defensible three-fold categorization in the three main chapters of his book.

Under the heading "The Schismatics: Sinners Against Love," Gaustad summarizes in swift-paced prose certain highlights in the history of church division. There have been many reasons for and patterns of separation—quests for a purer piety, longings for greater liberty, desires for religion attuned to the needs of a particular section like the frontier, or of a particular ethnic or racial group. The second category concerns "The Heretics: Sinners Against Faith." Some were heretics (from the majority viewpoint!) for reason's sake or in pursuit of Romantic visions, others were seeking a scientifically verifiable or humanistic religion, while still others were in quest of inward peace and/or outward prosperity. Gaustad's third category is broader and not as precise: "The Misfits: Sinners Against Society." Included here are those who have stood out against the pressures a society exerts toward religious conformity. Some, like the native Americans, have largely been destroyed; others, like Mormons and Jews, have had to go through some kind of exile in a wilderness or a ghetto. Some who have left out of the American dream have dramatized its shortcomings and aroused fear: Black Nationalists, Christian Marxists. Ridicule, patronization or sentimentalization has been the fate of other "misfits," such as Millennialists and Mennonites.

Gaustad's treatment of the dissenters allows us to look at American religious history from an unfamiliar angle, and the look is revealing. Something of the anguish and cost of the religious pluralism about which we speak so glibly is revealed. The often unwitting but sometimes deliberate sins of majorities are disclosed. The story of religious dissent is far from over, for its role "is to move a culture or a church or a university or a system back from its hardened, formula-bound, unseeing and unfeeling extreme toward the center once more" (p. 149). We shall understand the religious past and present better for reading Gaustad's brief, well-written, helpful book.

Clebsch's *American Religious Thought* is another kind of book entirely. The title is misleading, for the author focuses on three thinkers who have "resisted the moralistic spirituality toward which America's chief religious heritage, Puritanism, almost inevitably trends" (Marty, p. xvi). Hence he does not deal, except in passing, with much of American religious thought. He locates a distinct American spirituality in Edwards, Emerson and James as three "exemplars" or "eponyms" of religious striving. Each in his own characteristic way found the universe an eminently hospitable home for the human spirit.

The treatment of Jonathan Edwards, "the truly compelling religious virtuoso of American Puritanism," is remarkably well-balanced; it has something of the excitement of Perry Miller's discussion without its distortions. Clebsch is clear that "Gospel truths comprised for Edwards a world that embraced heaven and earth and hell, time and eternity, mind and body, spirit and nature, head and heart, revelation and reason, God's

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sovereignty and God's covenanting" (p. 19). The boldness and brilliance of Edwards' effort to bring together in a consistent whole theology and religious experience is underlined and illustrated. The many sides of a complex thinker are probed; persons who have read widely in Edwards and tried to do justice to him in the classroom will appreciate the artistic craftsmanship of this chapter. The author stresses the importance of Edwards' posthumously published *The Nature of True Virtue* with its shift of emphasis from duty to beauty, from ethics to esthetics, concluding that for Edwards "true religion is not to achieve moral goodness but to receive holy beauty" (p. 55). This is somewhat forced; with his passion for wholes the precocious Puritan included moral goodness *in* holy beauty.

Ralph Waldo Emerson is perceptively presented as a visual man, who wanted to impart rather than systematize his vision of American religiousness. The exposition discusses Emerson's diagnostic theory of institutional religion, his analytic theories of the moral and the religious sentiments, and dwells on his constructive theory of true religious experience "as at once universal, profitable, and exalting." His spirituality was often called unbelief by conventional religionists, but Clebsch's interpretation defends the Emersonian vision, though admitting that the sage of Concord "switched back and forth between the old language of grace or salvation and a new language of humanistic spirituality" (p. 93).

The interlude "From Emerson to James" is marred by an unfortunate interpretation of Horace Bushnell; serious readers of that theologian's major tomes could hardly conclude that he "believed the head unfit to comprehend religion." Clebsch follows Barbara Cross' rather one-sided approach to Bushnell's *life* and minimizes Shelton Smith's analysis of his *thought*.

The chapter on "The Human Religiousness of William James" is most intriguing, presenting the author of *The Varieties of Religious Experience* as one who climbed on the shoulders of Emerson and of his father "to post the great American manifesto of religious pluralism in which every kind of religious experience was measured by its benefit to the soul and to mankind" (p. 125). The intense spiritual depression through which James passed and out of which he emerged largely through the power of will offers the key to this interpretation: "James's radically empirical insistence that experiences reflexively contain their own significance is thus the clue to his religious life and thought: religiously we are saintly when we pray, saved when we yearn for salvation, free when we choose, just as psychologically we are angry when we strike, sorrowful when we weep, and so on. Approached by means of this clue, James's writings reveal an original but imitable spirituality that they never really describe, much less systematize" (p. 137). Yet the chapter does quite well in describing it; the author may be too eager to prefer James's agnosticism to his theism.

The final chapter offers comments on a few of the major religious thinkers since James—Rauschenbusch, Dewey, the Niebuhrs. Overall, this is a stimulating book; most readers will find themselves battling with the three eponyms and with their interpreter. Clebsch is an able writer who uses short but powerful sentences with telling effect. A certain bias against theology sometimes leads him into awkward extremes, as when in referring to Richard Niebuhr—who is presented as the summarizer of the legacy of American religion traced in this book—he observes that "In spite of his standing as a theologian leaning toward the European tradition, there are good reasons to construe him as a religious thinker and a summarily American one" (pp. 181f.). We can think of many other theologians in pluralistic America who were religious thinkers!

Cushing Strout's *The New Heavens and a New Earth: Political Religion in America* ought to be required reading for anyone who seeks to understand the American civil religion. Knowledgeable in history, religion, and literature, Strout moves in twenty chapters from "The Puritan Paradox" to "The New Secularism and the New Pluralism." He has cast the book as a commentary on the religion sections of Alexis de Tocqueville's *Democracy in America*, in which there was much attention to the way religious life related to the grave problems of sustaining a liberal democratic order. The author uses this approach broadly, as an aid in discussing the political consequences of American religion. Though he has not hesitated to be critical, Tocqueville comes off rather well for his insights on the complex relationships between religion and democracy. The book is impressively learned; the author moves with a sure touch through mountains of primary and secondary materials. In part because the book is cast as a commentary, it lacks a clear overall thesis, yet it does throw much light on the perennial problems of the relation of religious faith to political order.

Almost every chapter begins with Tocqueville—for example, he had a perceptive thesis on the Puritan contribution to democracy long before Perry and others wrote on the topic. The French observer did not sufficiently appreciate the role of religious revivals in American life; Strout fills the gap but underestimates the *positive* emotional power of evangelical piety. Tocqueville's recognition of the importance of the separation of church and state in allowing a people to be devoted both to religion and to freedom has been largely sustained by historical developments since his time. He also saw the threat that slavery and race prejudice posed for the American way. Strout devotes four chapters to the slavery crisis and the Civil War. Already in 1838, in contrast to the abolitionists, Lincoln was urging reverence for the Constitution and laws as a *"political religion,"* and was holding together "in a vital synthesis the Revolutionary tradition of the Declaration of 1776, the Constitutional tradition of the Convention of 1787, and the tradition of American Christianity" (p. 195). In Lincoln, "republican religion" found its leading hero, the man who

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"created his own Scripture for an American civic religion" (p. 198).

Since the Civil War, secularization as an accommodation of religion to the world has been a conspicuous reality; the author of *Democracy in America* developed the theme 140 years ago. What he could not have anticipated was the way successive floods of immigration were to alter the relatively homogeneous patterns of the America he knew. In the last third of his book, Strout speaks to the puzzling problem of distinguishing and relating the secular and religious ideas of American reform movements in a time of increasing pluralism. He illumines the contemporary scene through discussions of the social gospel, the Protestant ethic and its debasement, the efforts of the Supreme Court to settle school issues, the magic of Reinhold Niebuhr, and the voices of modern black prophets. "Tocqueville's historical sociology of American religion was too optimistic in its evaluations, but we knew even in 1831 that racial inequality, not religious diversity, was the most dangerous threat to republican union" (p. 344). Were he to return today, the French writer would have to qualify his hopes that republican religion could keep democracy healthy.

All three of these works make important contributions to a fuller understanding or religion in America. All of them suggest many topics for further study; Southern religion is not given sufficient attention in any one of them, and there is obvious need for deeper probing into the interrelations of Catholicism and civil religion. These three efforts to illumine the whole scene by attention to particular themes have

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REVIEWERS

ROBERT T. HANDY is a member of the faculty at Union Theological Seminary in New York City.

FRED M. HECHINGER is a member of the editorial staff of the *New York Times.*

ROBERT PHILLIPS' fifth book, *Moonstruck:: An Anthology of Lunar Poetry,* was published by *Vanguard* last February. His other books include fiction and criticism.

Fight world hunger and poverty through a Christian Citizens' Lobby

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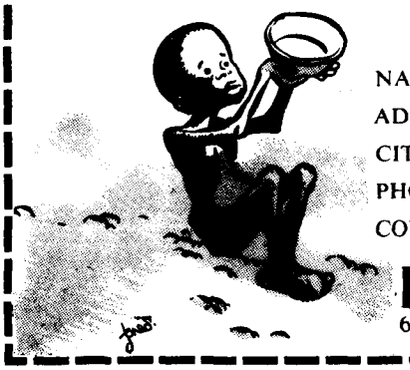
Dr. Eugene Carson Blake
President

Bishop Thomas J. Gumbleton
Vice President



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been fruitful, and provide both deepened insights and helpful models for the future.

Public School of Choice: A Place for the Reform of American Education

MARIO D. FANTINI

Simon and Schuster, $8.95

FRED M. HECHINGER

For the better part of a decade, proposals for the reform of public education have with dreary regularity been calling for the destruction of the public schools. Proposals have ranged from the use of public school funds to send the children off to non-public schools to not sending them to school at all. The latter solution was advertised as the "deschooling of society," the approximate equivalent of a promise to improve public health by means of de-doctoring society.

The movement was born in equal parts of legitimate dissatisfaction with the qualitative decline of over-bureaucraticized public schools and the romantic notion that anything that is compulsory must ipso facto be bad. It produced little more than highly repetitive debate and even more repetitive literature. A most recent example is Carl Bereiter who, having contributed some admirable ideas and programs for the teaching of disadvantaged children, should know better. Yet, he has lately delivered himself of *Must We Educate?*—a typical entry into the genre that says we must not, lest we impose the teachers', and society's, will on spirits that ought to remain free.

The sated and wary reviewer should therefore be forgiven for being tempted to greet Mario D. Fantini's *Public Schools of Choice* with skepticism or a stifled yawn. And yet, there was a glimmer of hope that this "plan for the reform of American education" might, as the title suggests, propose something other than doing away with the public schools or declaring them bankrupt and up for litigation. One grasps at straws. Could this book be a positive proposal? Could it signify a break in the familiar trend of giving up on Benjamin Franklin and Horace Mann?

The answer is happily that it could, particularly since Mr. Fantini is ideologically far closer to the disenchanted critics of public education's monopolistic rigidities than he is to the public school establishment. He had been, it should be recalled, one of the architects of New York City's school decentralization that originally so upset the old-time religion of his fellow-professionals.

Although himself a professional—he is dean of education at the State University of New York at New Paltz—Mr. Fantini was driven to the conclusion that something was wrong when he found the school authorities determined to bend his son's mind to fit the requirements of the fixed plan of operations rather than vice versa. It was, as so many other parents had long known, a case of take it because you can't leave it. Even though Mr. Fantini could offer expert proof that a more open, informal approach to his son would indeed produce better results, the system would not accommodate him, even though there were a substantial number of other parents who would have opted for such an alternative.

In contrast to the by now familiar critical response to a deplorable situation, Mr. Fantini does not urge that the public schools be dismantled. He does not invoke the magic cure-all prescribed by the radical reform movement—the voucher system that would allow parents to take their public education allowance and give it to the private schools.

Mr. Fantini knows—as the experience of the G.I. Bill has shown—that vouchers do not create new alternatives; they merely allow a minimal shift of enrollment from public to private institutions by filling up the latter's empty spaces. Cost-of-tuition vouchers simply are not enough to finance the creation of new non-public alternatives. To me this seems fortunate because it prevents vouchers from posing a real threat to public education—but it also means that those who tout vouchers as a panacea are only deceiving their followers.

Nor does Mr. Fantini have any taste for the saccharine child liberation that promises the freedom and happiness of illiteracy. "Public schools with their traditions of experience," he writes, "are more likely to protect the next generation from these pitfalls than are the less accountable alternative private schools."

What Mr. Fantini wants instead is what amounts to an internal voucher system—not private alternatives to the public schools but a wide variety of alternatives within the public schools system and even within individual schools.

The sound and attractive concept is theoretically not in conflict with what so many educators profess—that they are dedicated to the recognition of individual differences and committed to paying attention to those differences. Regrettably, this admirable theory has consistently run up against the administrator's credo—to seek and impose what Elwood Cubberley, the administrators' patron saint, established long ago as the fixed goal for generations of public school managers: "the one best way."

Mr. Fantini offers some sensible and workable ground rules for a system that would offer children real choice of educational patterns. No solution—traditional or progressive—would be superimposed; they would be "a matter of choice for all participants—teachers, parents and students."

This should be an attainable goal: It is neither radical nor utopian. Such a plan may well be essential to the rescue and preservation of the public schools. That is precisely why one wishes Mr. Fantini to be slightly more realistically critical of those alternatives he cites as examples and more realistic, too, concerning the obstacles he is sure to encounter.

With disarming honesty, Mr. Fantini offers, as an addendum to the book, a letter from Herbert Kohl, a more

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radical school critic, that throws something of a wet blanket on his friend's lyrical account of the alternative options in the Berkeley, Calif., school district. But Berkeley is not alone among the examples cited that have also turned out less satisfactory than their blueprint. Mr. Fantini tends to be too confident in the power of positive blueprints.

He is too confident, too, in the establishment's readiness to depart from its appointed course. While it is perfectly true that the retraining of teachers is essential, Mr. Fantini ought also to know that few of his fellow deans of education match his willingness to be unorthodox.

One hesitates to charge an author who is fundamentally so obviously pointing in the right direction with the fault of gullibility. Yet, what else is one to say about Mr. Fantini when he declares his faith in Richard Nixon's verbal commitment to the "reform," and "renewal," of American education. The central theme of *Public Schools of Choice* is too persuasive to be saddled with ballast of deceptive political rhetoric.

Those of us who wish Mr. Fantini well because he has accurately diagnosed the self-destructive rigidities of the public school system can only hope that reform-minded readers of his book will be sufficiently sophisticated to pursue his vision without the author's one serious weakness— the theoretician's tendency to place trust in those who promise much without the accompanying commitment to deliver. The road to educational disappointment has too often been paved with good intentions and naive implementation.

The Eye of the Storm

PATRICK WHITE

Viking, $8.95

ROBERT PHILLIPS

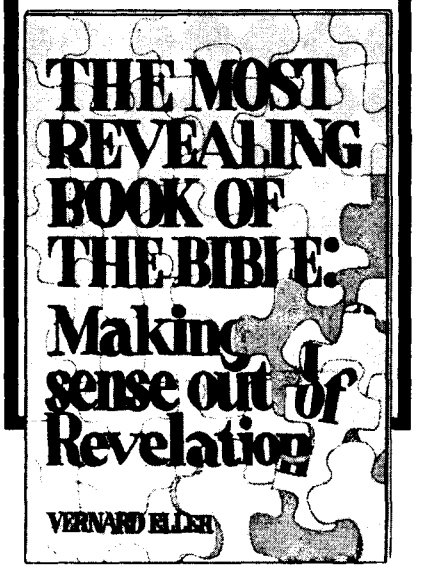
It has been remarked that in every fat man there is a thin man struggling to get out. If we apply this image to the big new novel by recent Nobel Laureate Patrick White, we find ourselves asking, what private personality and ideas is White attempting to release and express in this 600-page opus? And how, technically, does he manage the escape and transformation?

White's thesis in this fat (but not bloated) novel is simply this: We are all alone in a chaotic world, and only we ourselves can help ourselves during our brief tenure. Others are predators who hinder rather than help. "Families can eat you," one of White's characters says, and his novel proceeds to demonstrate just that. Even the Hunter family's trusted old solicitor, in the end, is revealed as a thief.

Central to the novel is Elizabeth Hunter, the heroine (though none of White's characters are "heroic"—she is destined to remain forever a mere "hunter" after truth) who was once abandoned in the path, indeed the very eye, of a cyclon.e She survives, and achieves some measure of wisdom from the awe-full experience: "Whatever is given you to live, you alone can live, and re-live, and re-live, till it is gasped out of you." It is the gasping-out of Elizabeth Hunter's life which provides the novel's drama. A former power and beauty, in the first sentence she is an old woman moaning on her bed after a stroke, and dead by book's end. In between, she and the reader review her life through a series of flashbacks as well as the reminiscences of an incredibly large, Dickensian cast of nurses, servants, housekeepers, solicitors, lovers—plus her own son and daughter, a knighted actor and a beknighted princess.

This latter pair have come back to Australia at last, not to see their dying mother, but to protect what will soon be their inheritance by preventing her from "squandering" it on personal comforts in her old age. Their notion is to shunt her off to a "Home," and thereby deprive her of her own home. The old lady foils them through an act of will, dying earlier than expected. In her death as in her life, Elizabeth Hunter has the last word. It seems very much to White's point that she dies upon her richly-carved, swan-encrusted mahogany commode. An ironical soul, Patrick

There's another way to read it.



What *does* the book of Revelation reveal? Writing primarily for the layman, Vernard Eller offers a fresh approach to a book that is often regarded as mysterious and confusing.

But what Revelation is intended to reveal, says Eller, is simply "the gospel, the good news of who Jesus Christ is and what he accomplishes." What it does *not* intend to reveal is "secret information regarding the when and how of events from the hidden future." And in his "reading commentary" on Revelation, Eller approaches every passage with the question, "What is John trying to tell us about Jesus?"

Filtering out distracting details, the author focuses on the meaning of the book as a whole, rather than offering a verse-by-verse interpretation.

Read in that way, Eller finds THE MOST REVEALING BOOK OF THE BIBLE *does* make sense.

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White seems to be saying that all the art and artifice with which Mrs. Hunter surrounded herself cannot save her—or us—from our common and solitary end.

The second half of our question is not so easy to answer: White's technique in projecting or dramatizing this thesis. He is not, to begin with, an instinctive, non-analytical writer, an objective realist or a subjective romanticist. Every scene seems an ordered, deliberate counterpoint to another, all of which are parts of a single artistic whole rather than a reflection of life's chaos. Further, White is a bit of a symbolist. When a rare platypus, or pink sapphire, or basin of mould, make an appearance, he intends them to carry secondary significance; when a character is badly named Flora Manhood, we can also assume he means the name to bear symbolic freight. And the repeated references to *King Lear* and to *The Charterhouse of Parma* bear scrutiny for their relation to White's own book. (The son Basil and the daughter Dorothy are more than a bit like Shakespeare's Goneril and Regan, concerned only with the division of the kingdom rather than the verities of the heart, and Mrs. Hunter herself could be compared with Stendahl's Contessa, a composite vision of the *bellezza folgorante* [the beauty that blinds like lightning] of all the women of Stendhal's and White's dreams.)

Unlike Stendhal, for whom the surface of life had no appeal, White seems near-preoccupied with surfaces. He documents every drop of dew on the rose, every mote of dust in the air. His descriptions give the novel a rich texture: Sentence for sentence he writes the most beautiful novelistic prose since Elizabeth Bowen. Occasionally the texture is too rich, a bit like over-indulgence in chocolate *mousse*, as when White describes certain young females as "blue-glaring out of their wounded leather." How does one blue-glare? And why is their leather wounded?

Yet White's attention to minutiae has its rewards. When Sir Basil continues drowsily smiling, "till a hair bent in one of his nostrils, making him sneeze," we recognize a writer who perceives the little annoyances of man. He is particularly good at recording our most embarrassing moments, as when Sir Basil makes a pass at Sister Manhood:

> Probably on account of the twinge throwing him slightly off balance, he caught hold of a handful of flesh she wasn't proud of (it was superfluous) above her right hip; and Basil Hunter looked angry that his technique should let him down, converting a smooth pass into what must look an act of vulgar clumsiness.

Yes, we think life *is* like that. More misfires than direct hits. White shows us stumble as well as sail, and he is particularly good describing the awkwardness of sex.

A further attribute of White's technique is the sheer epigrammatic quality of his prose. Phrase after phrase cries out to be underlined, memorized. For instance: "Most of life is compulsion or coincidence." . . . "To offer pity—that's the most disgusting act of all." . . "You can't condemn artifice without dismissing the whole of art" . . . "A man develops only one of his several potential lives. There's no reason why he shouldn't live them all."

Finally there are White's essays into stream-of-consciousness. For the most part, these are brief and seem pre-Joycean. White pricks at the surface, but never succeeds in stripping away whole layers. Despite his excellences—and there are many—what White says of Elizabeth Hunter must finally apply to his own work, at least as evidenced in this novel: "Elizabeth Hunter was never womanly enough, her flaws too perfectly disguised under appearance, enormous, gaping, at times agonizing flaws." After all the fascinating descriptions and adroit aphorisims, White's characters while not quite types, are exceedingly thin of blood. The blood they lack is White's own, and if they are less than human, it is because he seems less than humane. With perhaps the exception of Frau Lippman, the author shows no compassion for any of these people. He is a demiurge, looking down, pulling strings, unsmilingly.

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IN BRIEF

CERVANTES *by Richard L. Predmore, Dodd, Mead, $15.* At one point in his great novel Don Quixote discourses at some length on the relative merits of Arms and Letters, two major areas of human endeavor between which many men of the Renaissance felt themselves compelled to choose. Not Miguel

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de Cervantes, though, who followed long service as a warrior with his literary vocation, and who was patriotically or perversely proud, till the end, of the crippled hand that he had earned in the battle of Lepanto. The two careers—along with several more pedestrian ones like commissary and tax collector—give Cervantes, like Byron, a natural fascination for biographers, and so in a profusely and handsomely illustrated book Richard Predmore (author of a superb critical study, *The World of Don Quixote*) tells once again the sad story of Cervantes' five years in prison in Algiers, his frequent and prolonged separation from his family, the final and total rejection by his daughter, the struggle for patronage and recognition, and the periods of great poverty alternating with periods of yet greater poverty. Although *Cervantes* is "popular" biography, more or less, Predmore is meticulous in his scholarship and on certain important points he does set the record straight: Cervantes never had a university education, and he was not jailed in Seville in 1601 or 1602 for what would have been the second time there. Still, so careful is Predmore not to speculate beyond demonstrable facts, so dependent is his whole conception on those facts, so free of intuition, that a rather bloodless portrait of his hero emerges. And the large question that takes one to a biography of Cervantes in the first place remains unanswered: why did that gaunt knight Don Quixote ever choose him to chronicle his own uncertain fortunes?

MARK TAYLOR

CORRESPONDENCE

(Continued from page 251)

mentary system, creates separate and competing branches of government, deliberately building a balance of conflict and cooperation into the system so no branch may dominate another (as Hamilton said, in the quote misused by Reuss). The President, for instance, is elected by the nation, not by Congress, and the Presidency is to be subject to law, not to Congress.

Now Reuss would create what amounts to a recall petition and referendum for the President, with the power of petition vested not in the people, but in Congress, a separate and often competing and even hostile branch of government. The federal system was not designed to make Congress dominant over the Presidency. As Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., points out, the response to the "imperial Presidency" of recent times is not Congressional sovereignty.

(REV.) DANIEL A. DEGNAN, S.J.

Religion in Germany

Heidelberg, Germany

To the Editors: I have read Gordon C. Zahn's article, "Religion and Politics in Germany" [Feb. 22] with bated breath. According to my knowledge of the situation, he has hit the right nail on the head. As to his objecting to the Munich pastoral, I think he is very right.

If I am to add some observations:

1) With regard to Catholic Bavaria, in 1925 the Bavarian voters rendered possible Hindenburg's election, the prelude of the seizure of power by Hitler, who only in the Catholic Bavaria (today the Bavaria of Franz Joseph Straus) could find his base of operations.

2) The fateful and humiliating part of the Zentrum, the predecessor of the CDU/CSU, in granting Hitler his totalitarian "emergency" powers, is duly characterized by Mr. Zahn.

3) Today, e.g., the abortion theme for the Catholic political group is less a serious moral problem than a means to overthrow the hateful Social-Democratic government.

4) The existence of so-called Christian political parties is generally, in Germany especially, most discrediting to the Christian and particularly Catholic position.

5) The state of things becomes very well illustrated by the difference between the German and the French bishops, if it refers, e.g., to helping the Chileans suffering under suppression.

(REV.) ALFONS BEIL

Michael Novak (Cont.)

of others a step more accurately, we see the way our earlier habits of perception had been too limited—we learn something about our own deficiencies or limits.

Being an American is not quite like being a Frenchman. But neither is it like being a Japanese; nor, again (even if one is black) like being a Nigerian. Each one of these other cultures illumines parts of the American experience not illumined by the others.

For humans, to know oneself is to know oneself as part of one branch of a family tree. Today our full identity is grasped only when all the relations of all human cultures are known. What position do we Americans actually occupy in the human race? The humanities ought to demystify pretensions.

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